

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough examination of the claims as evidenced in the Office Action dated January 24, 2005. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections to the claims contained therein.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 8, 13, 15, 18 and 20 have been amended. Claims 7, 11 and 17 have been cancelled. Claims 1-6, 8-10, 12-16, and 18-20 are currently pending in this application.

The Examiner objected to an informality in claim 20. Claim 20 has been replaced "mans" in line 5 to "means".

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 8, 12, 13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,178,512 to Fifield. The Examiner also rejected claims 5, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fifield. The Examiner further rejected claims 3, 4, 6 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fifield in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,870,541 Frink or U.S. Patent No. 6,597,671 to Ahmadi et al. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 7, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable if written in independent form including all limitations of the base claim. Claim 1 is therefore allowable. Claims 2-6 depend from allowable claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons claim 1 is allowable.

Claim 8 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 11, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable if written in independent form including all limitations of the base claim. Claim 8 is therefore allowable. Claims 9-10 and 12-14 depend from allowable claim 8 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons claim 8 is allowable.


Claim 15 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 17, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable if written in independent form including all limitations of the base claim. Claim 15 is therefore allowable. Claims 16 and 18-20

depend from allowable claim 15 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons claim 15 is allowable.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating claims 7, 11, 17 and 20 contain allowable subject matter. Applicants believe the incorporation of the subject matter of these claims into their respective independent claims renders moot the Examiner's objections thereto.

Accordingly, with entry of the amendments and consideration of the arguments and remarks contained herein, all pending claims are now allowable, and a notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Applicants note that the pendency of this application is nearly six years, and therefore request the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorney if further issues remain in the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully Submitted,


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